A HAPPY MARRIED LIFE

(A Buddhist Perspective)

DR. K. SRI DHAMMANANDA

A HAPPY MARRIED LIFE

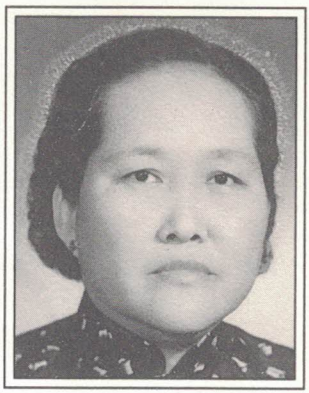
(A Buddhist Perspective)

DR. K. SRI DHAMMANANDA

Published by
Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre
No. 11, Neo Pee Teck Lane
Singapore, 0511
Tel: 7783330

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED
LATE PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS.

MR. LIM KANG LENG
Departed on 13-8-66



MDM. WEE GEOK ENG
Departed on 26-5-84

The book was published in memory of late Mr. Lim Kang Leng & Mdm. Wee Geok Eng, for the growing demand of Buddhists for this book.

"SABBA DANAM DHAMMA DANAM JINATI"
"This gift of truth excels all other gifts" said The Buddha. I would like to express my heartfelt blessings to the donors, who have so kindly defrayed the cost of printing of this book.

May They Attain The Bliss Of Nibbana

Ven'ble W. Sarada Thero
No.11, Neo Pee Teck Lane
Singapore 0511.
Tel: 7783330 Fax: 7730150

August 1992

CONTENTS

Page No.

1. INTRODUCTION 7

2. THE NATURE OF LOVE AND PLEASURE . . . 9
   - Love
   - Sex
   - The Buddha's Explanation
   - Pleasure

3. THE REALITY OF MARRIED LIFE 14
   - Problems
   - Sharing and Trust
   - Blinded by Emotions
   - Material Needs
   - Pre-marriage Advice

4. THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE . . 19
   - Role of Religion

5. THE RELIGIOUS DILEMMA 22
   - Individual Rights
   - Post-marriage Blues
   - The Ceremony

6. SECURITY, RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITIES 25
   - Sense of Insecurity
   - Husband and Wife
   - The Past
   - Modern Society
   - Divorce
   - Responsibility towards the Children
   - Buddhist Views

Page No.

7. POLYGAMY OR MONOGAMY 47

8. NEW TECHNOLOGY 49
   Family Planning
   Test-tube Babies

9. MORALITY 51
   Premarital Sex
   Sexual Misconduct
   Irresponsible Sexual Behaviour

10. THE EAST AND THE WEST 54

11. CELIBACY 57
   What is Celibacy?
   Significance of Celibacy
   Celibacy versus Responsibility
   The Buddha's Experience

12. SUMMARY 61

APPENDIX 63

I) THE AFFECTIONATE MOTHER 64

II) MORAL CODE 68

FOREWORD

From time immemorial, man has been preoccupied with the pursuit of happiness in life, from the cradle to the grave. He works and struggles very hard to attain happiness, very often without knowing exactly what happiness means because of his ignorance of the nature of life. Although all religions provide advice and guidelines for their adherents to practise in order to attain happiness in life, more often than not, these advices and guidelines are ignored owing to man's craving, hatred and illusion. Many people who experienced frustrations and sufferings hope and pray to find happiness for present life and here after, others, though enjoying a large measure of happiness on earth, are still not contented and crave for eternal bliss in heaven after leaving this world. For the ordinary man, as for the child, it is difficult to make a distinction between happiness and pleasure. To him, that which gives pleasure gives happiness, and to be happy is to experience pleasure.

Very often, we consider childhood days to be a period of happiness. In reality, as children we do not understand what happiness is. Under the protection of our parents, we pass our days in a perpetual round of enjoyment which undoubtedly gives us pleasure. As we enter adolescence, changes take place in the mind and physical body causing

us to become aware of the existence of the opposite sex and we begin to experience a new kind of attraction giving rise to disturbing emotions. At the same time, curiosity drives us to find out about the facts of life, through peer discussion and book reading. Before long, we find ourselves on the threshold of adulthood, the crucial time in our life when we look for a suitable life-partner to begin a relationship that will put to the test all the qualities that we have acquired earlier in life. Love, sex, and marriage then become matters of great importance that will determine the quality of the married life we will have.

Young people today are exposed to a large variety of 'Western' influences which are disseminated through the mass media such as books and magazines, television, video cassettes and movies, resulting in the acquisition of distorted ideas regarding love, sex, and marriage. The age-old 'Eastern' moral virtues and values are being gradually eroded in the face of these influences. Practices unheard of and never carried out by the older generation have become common place among young people today. Are the 'Western' influences really responsible for this state of affairs or should the parents be blamed for the misdeeds of their children for not exercising proper control and supervision over them? In this book, it is explained that most television programmes and movies do not represent the way most decent people in the West think or behave and that there is a vast 'silent majority' of decent couples who are

as deeply religious and 'conservative' about love, sex, and marriage as any 'Eastern' couple. If young people want to ape the West, they are advised to ape this 'silent majority' who are no different from their decent neighbour who lives next door to them.

Modern life is fraught with all kinds of tension and stress. Doubtless, very often it is tension and stress that creates problems in many a marriage. If a proper analysis is made into the root causes of such social problems as pre-marital sex, teenage pregnancies, unhappy marriages and divorces, child-abuse and wife-battering, we inevitably discover that it is due mainly to selfishness and lack of patience, tolerance and mutual understanding. In the **Sigalovada Sutta**, the Buddha gives good advice on how to maintain peace and harmony in the home between husband and wife in order to achieve a happy married life. Parental responsibilities for children and the children's duties towards parents are also clearly mentioned in the **Sutta** as useful guidelines for the attainment of a happy home. In this book, the Ven. Author stresses the important point that marriage is a partnership of two individuals and that this partnership is enriched and enhanced when it allows the personalities involved to grow. In the Buddhist perspective, marriage means understanding and respecting each other's beliefs and privacy. The present time is most opportune for a book of this nature to be published to provide the followers of the Buddhist religion, in particular the

young, with a clear understanding of life's important matters like love, sex and marriage which will not only help them to live a happy married life but also assist them to lead peaceful and contented lives.

On behalf of the Buddhist Missionary Society I wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to many of our devoted members for all the help and services rendered in the preparation of this book. Our special thanks are due to: Mr. Vijaya Samarawickrama for undertaking the editorial work, Mr. Teh Thean Choo, Miss Quah Pin Pin and Mrs. Chong Hong Choo for their valuable assistance and Mr. Paw Oo Thett of Burma for the cover design.

Tan Teik Beng
JSM, SMS, KMN, PKT
Vice President, Buddhist Missionary Society
Former Director, Department of Education, Selangor.
20 December 1986

1. INTRODUCTION

From the Buddhist point of view, marriage is neither holy nor unholy. Buddhism does not regard marriage as a religious duty nor as a sacrament that is ordained in heaven. A cynic has said that while some people believe that marriage is planned in heaven, others say that it is recorded in hell also! Marriage is basically a personal and social obligation, it is not compulsory. Man and woman must have freedom either to get married or to remain single. This does not mean that Buddhism is against marriage. Nobody in this world would say that marriage is bad and there is no religion which is against marriage.

Practically all living things come into being as a result of sex life. Among human beings, the institution of marriage has come about so that society guarantees the perpetuation of the human species and also ensures that the young would be cared for. This is based on the argument that children born through the pleasure of sex must be the responsibility of the partners involved, at least until they have grown up. And marriage ensures that this responsibility is upheld and carried out.

A society grows through a network of relationships which are mutually inter-twined

and inter-dependent. Every relationship is a whole-hearted commitment to support and to protect others in a group or community. Marriage plays a very important part in this strong web of relationships of giving support and protection. A good marriage should grow and develop gradually from understanding and not impulse, from true loyalty and not just sheer indulgence. The institution of marriage provides a fine basis for the development of culture, a delightful association of two individuals to be nurtured and to be free from loneliness, deprivation and fear. In marriage, each partner develops a complementary role, giving strength and moral courage to one another, each manifesting a supportive and appreciative recognition of the other's skill in caring and providing for a family. There must be no thought of either man or woman being superior – each is complementary to the other; marriage is a partnership of equality, gentleness, generosity, calm and dedication.

In Buddhism, one can find all the necessary advice which can help one to lead a happy married life. One should not neglect the advice given by the Enlightened Teacher if one really wants to lead a happy married life. In His discourses, the Buddha gave various kinds of advice for married couples and for those who are contemplating marriage. The Buddha has said, "If a man can find a suitable and understanding wife and a woman can find a suitable and understanding husband, both are fortunate indeed".

2. THE NATURE OF LOVE AND PLEASURE

Love

There are different kinds of love, and these are variously expressed as motherly love, brotherly love, sensual love, emotional love, sexual love, selfish love, selfless love and universal love.

If people develop only their carnal or selfish love towards each other, that type of love cannot last long. In a true love relationship, one should not ask how much one can get, but how much one can give.

When beauty, complexion and youth start to fade away, a husband who considers only the physical aspects of love may think of acquiring another young one. That type of love is animal love or lust. If a man really develops love as an expression of human concern for another being, he will not lay emphasis only on the external beauty and physical attractiveness of his partner. The beauty and attractiveness of his partner should be in his heart and mind, not in what he sees. Likewise, the wife who follows Buddhist teachings will never neglect her husband even though he has become old, poor or sick.

'I have a fear that the modern girl loves

to be Juliet to have a dozen Romeos. She loves adventure . . . . . The modern girl dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun, but to attract attention. She improves upon nature by painting herself and looking extraordinary.'

(Gandhi)

Sex

Sex by itself is not "evil", although the temptation and craving for it invariably disturbs the peace of mind, and hence is not conducive to spiritual development.

In the ideal situation, sex is the physical culmination of a deeply satisfying emotional relationship, where both partners give and take equally.

The portrayal of love by commercial groups through the mass media in what we call "western" culture is not "real" love. When an animal wants to have sex, it shows its "love", but after having experienced sex, it just forgets about love. For animals, sex is just an instinctive drive necessary for procreation. But a human being has much more to offer in the concept of love. Duties and responsibilities are important ingredients to maintain unity, harmony and understanding in a relationship between human beings.

Sex is not the most important ingredient for happiness in a married life. Those who have

become slaves to sex would only ruin love and humanity in marriage. Apart from that, a woman must cease to consider herself as the object of a man's lust. The remedy is more in her hand than in a man's. She must refuse to adorn herself simply to please a man, even if he is her husband. If she wants to be an equal partner with a man, she should dress so that her dignity is enhanced, and she does not become a sex symbol. Marriage for the satisfaction of the sexual appetite is no marriage. It is concupiscence.

(Gandhi)

Love may indeed be a product of sex, but the reverse is likewise true: sex is an expression of love. In the ideally happy married life, both love and sex are inseparable.

The Buddha's Explanation

We can study the Buddha's teaching regarding the feelings that man and woman have for each other. The Buddha says that he had never seen any object in this world which attracts man's attention more than the figure of a woman. At the same time the main attraction for the woman is the figure of a man. It means that by nature, woman and man give each other worldly pleasure. They cannot gain happiness of this kind from any other object. When we observe very carefully, we notice that among all the things which provide pleasure, there is no other object that can please all the five senses at the same time beside the male and female figures.

The ancient Greeks knew this when they said that originally man and woman were one. They were separated and the two parts that were divided are constantly seeking to be re-united as man and woman.

Pleasure

Young people by nature like to indulge in worldly pleasures which can include both good and bad things. Good things, like the enjoyment of music, poetry, dance, good food, dress and similar pursuits do no harm to the body. They only distract us from seeing the fleeting nature and uncertainty of existence and thereby delay our being able to perceive the true nature of the self.

The faculties and senses of young people are very fresh and alert; they are very keen to satisfy all the five senses. Almost everyday, they plan and think out ways and means to experience some form of pleasure. By the very nature of existence, one will never be completely satisfied with whatever pleasure one experiences and the resultant craving in turn only creates more anxieties and worries.

When we think deeply about it, we can understand that life is nothing but a dream. In the end, what do we gain from attachment to this life? Only more worries, disappointments and frustrations. We may have enjoyed brief moments of pleasure, but in the final analysis, we must try to find out what the real purpose of our lives is.

When one ceases to crave for sensual pleasure and does not seek to find physical comfort in the company of others, the need for marriage does not arise. Suffering and worldly enjoyment are both the outcome of craving, attachment and emotion. If we try to control and suppress our emotions by adopting unrealistic tactics we create disturbances in our mind and in our physical body. Therefore we must know how to handle and control our human passion. Without abusing or misusing this passion, we can tame our desires through proper understanding.

3. THE REALITY OF MARRIED LIFE

John J. Robinson in his book **"Of Suchness"** gives the following advice on love, sex and married life. "Be careful and discreet; it is much easier to get married than unmarried. If you have the right mate, it's heavenly; but if not, you live in a twenty-four-hour daily hell that clings constantly to you, it can be one of the most bitter things in life. Life is indeed strange. Somehow, when you find the right one, you know it in your heart. It is not just an infatuation of the moment. But the powerful urges of sex drive a young person headlong into blind acts and one cannot trust his feelings too much. This is especially true if one drinks and get befuddled; the most lousy slut in a dark bar can look like a Venus then, and her charms become irresistable. Love is much more than sex though; it is the biological foundation between a man and a woman; love and sex get all inter-twined and mixed up".

Problems

Almost everyday, we hear people complaining about their marriages. Very seldom do we hear stories about a happy marriage. Young people reading romantic novels and seeing romantic films often conclude that marriage is a bed of roses. Unfortunately, marriage is not as sweet as one

thinks. Marriage and problems are interrelated and people must remember that when they are getting married, they will have to face problems and responsibilities that they had never expected or experienced hitherto.

People often think that it is a duty to get married and that marriage is a very important event in their lives. However, in order to ensure a successful marriage, a couple has to harmonise their lives by minimising whatever differences they may have between them. Marital problems prompted a cynic to say that there can only be a peaceful married life if the marriage is between a blind wife and a deaf husband, for the blind wife cannot see the faults of the husband and a deaf husband cannot hear the nagging of his wife.

Sharing and Trust

One of the major causes of marital problems is suspicion and mistrust. Marriage is a blessing but many people make it a curse due to lack of understanding.

Both husband and wife should show implicit trust for one another and try not to have secrets between them. Secrets create suspicion, suspicion leads to jealously, jealousy generates anger, anger causes enmity and enmity may result in separation, suicide or even murder.

If a couple can share pain and pleasure in their day-to-day life, they can console each other

and minimize their grievances. Thus, the wife or husband should not expect to experience only pleasure. There will be a lot of painful, miserable experiences that they will have to face. They must have the strong will power to reduce their burdens and misunderstandings. Discussing mutual problems will give them confidence to live together with better understanding.

Man and woman need the comfort of each other when facing problems and difficulties. The feelings of insecurity and unrest will disappear and life will be more meaningful, happy and interesting if there is someone who is willing to share another's burden.

Blinded by Emotions

When two people are in love, they tend to show only the best aspects of their nature and character to each other in order to project a good impression of themselves. Love is said to be blind and hence people in love tend to become completely oblivious of the darker side of each other's natures.

In practice, each will try to highlight his or her sterling qualities to the other, and being so engrossed in love, they tend to accept each other at "face value" only. Each lover will not disclose the darker side of his or her nature for fear of losing the other. Any personal shortcomings are discreetly swept under the carpet, so to speak, so as not to

jeopardise their chances of winning each other. People in love also tend to ignore their partner's faults thinking that they will be able to correct them after marriage, or that they can live with these faults, that "love will conquer all".

However, after marriage, as the initial romantic mood wears off, the true nature of each other's character will be revealed. Then, much to the disappointment of both parties, the proverbial veil that had so far been concealing the innermost feelings of each partner is removed to expose the true nature of both partners. It is then that disillusion sets in.

Material Needs

Love by itself does not subsist on fresh air and sunshine alone. The present world is a materialistic world and in order to meet your material needs, proper financing and budgeting is essential. Without it, no family can live comfortably. Such a situation aptly bears out the saying that "when poverty knocks at the door, love flies through the window". This does not mean that one must be rich to make a marriage work. However, if one has the basic necessities of life provided through a secure job and careful planning, many unnecessary anxieties can be removed from a marriage.

The discomfort of poverty can be averted if there is complete understanding between the couple. Both partners must understand the value

of contentment. Both must treat all problems as "our problems" and share all the "ups" and "downs" in the true spirit of a long-standing life partnership.

Pre-marriage Advice

The **Anguttara Nikaya** contains some valuable advice which the Buddha gave to young girls prior to their marriage. Realising that there could be difficulties with the new in-laws, the girls were enjoined to give every respect to their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, serving them lovingly as their own parents. They were expected to honour and respect their husband's relatives and friends, thus creating a congenial and happy atmosphere in their new homes.

They were also advised to study and understand their husbands' natures, ascertain their activities, characters and temperaments, and to be useful and cooperative at all times in their new homes. They should be polite, kind and watchful of their husbands' earnings and see to it that all household expenditures were properly administered. The advice given by the Buddha more than twenty five centuries ago is still valid even today.

4. THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

In view of what has been said about "birth and suffering", some people have criticised Buddhism saying that it is against married life. They are wrong. The Buddha never spoke against married life. However, he pointed out all the problems, difficulties and worries that people would have to face when they take on the responsibility of marriage. Just because he warned one against problems in marriage does not mean that the Buddha condemned marriage.

The act of marriage itself implies that a person is still more attached to the physical world and since our mental faculties are influenced by craving, attachment and human emotions, it is but natural that problems would arise. This happens when we have to consider the needs of others and to give in to what others need.

Role of Religion

A deep analysis of the nature of self is important to help us to understand the origin of our problems, worries, miseries and how to overcome them. Here, religious advice is important for maintaining a tranquil life. However, a man should not become a slave to any religion. **Man is not for religion, religion is for man.** That means man must

know how to make use of religion for his betterment and for his happiness in a respectable way. Simply by following certain religious vows, precepts or commandments with blind faith or by force, thinking that we are duty-bound to observe them will not develop proper understanding.

One important aspect of Buddhism is that the Buddha did not impose any religious laws or commandments. The Buddha was a unique teacher who had set out a number of disciplinary codes for us to uphold according to our way of life. Those who follow the precepts observe them voluntarily but not as obligatory religious laws. It is up to us to follow the advice through our own understanding and experience of what is good for us and for others. Through trial and error, we will learn to follow the advice which will give us just peace and happiness.

One should try to understand the nature of the worldly life. By knowing that you have to face problems, you will be able to strengthen your mind and be more prepared to face the problems that could arise if you get married. Religion is important to help you overcome your problems. Whatever you learnt about religious principles when you were young can be adopted to avoid misunderstanding, disappointment and frustration. At the same time, certain good qualities such as patience and understanding which we learned through religion are important assets to help us to lead a peaceful married life.

Normally, it is due to a lack of mutual understanding that many married couples lead miserable lives. The result of this is that their innocent children also have to suffer. It is better to know how to handle your problems in order to lead a happy married life. Religion can help you to do this.

5. THE RELIGIOUS DILEMMA

Individual Rights

One of the causes of greatest concern among those who do not belong to the non-semitic religions is the problem of conversion before marriage. While Buddhists and Hindus never demand that a couple must belong to the same religion before a marriage can be solemnized, many others tend to take advantage of this tolerance.

Marriage, contrary to what many romantic novels say, does not mean the total and absolute merging of two people to the extent that each loses his or her own identity. When a religion demands that both partners must have the same religious label, it denies the basic human right of an individual to believe what he or she wants. Societies throughout history have proved that "Unity in Diversity" is not only possible but desirable. Out of diversity comes greater respect and understanding. This should apply to marriage also. There are many living examples all over the world where the husband and wife maintain their own beliefs and yet are able to maintain their happy married life without confronting each other.

Buddhists do not oppose the existence of other religions even within the same household.

Unfortunately this generous attitude has been exploited by unscrupulous religionists who are out to gain converts by all means.

Intelligent Buddhists must be aware of this stratagem. No self-respecting intelligent human being who really understands what he believes according to his own conviction should give up his beliefs merely to satisfy the man-made demands of another religion. Buddhists do not demand that their partners embrace Buddhism. Neither should they surrender their own beliefs.

Post-marriage Blues

When young people are in love, they are prepared to make many sacrifies so long as they can get married. But after a few years, when the real task of building a successful marriage begins, frustrations begin to set in. When a partner who had given up his deep-seated religious beliefs for "love" begins to regret having done so, unnecessary misunderstandings arise. These provide added tensions at a period when there is boredom in a marriage. There will be quarrels. And normally, one of the main causes of these quarrels will be the question of which religion the children should belong to.

Therefore, it is most important for one to know that if there is a process of conversion involved, it must be based on true conviction and not mere convenience or compulsion. Buddhist main-

tain the freedom of the individual to choose. This principle should be respected by all.

The Ceremony

There is no specific Buddhist ritual or procedure to conduct a marriage. Buddhism recognises the traditions and cultures practised by people in different countries. Hence, Buddhist religious ceremonies differ from one country to another.

In general practice, a religious service for blessing and to give advice to the couple is customarily performed either in the temple or at home to give a greater significance to the marriage. Nowadays, in many countries, besides the blessing service, religious organizations also have been given the authority to solemnise and register marriages together with the issuance of legal marriage certificates.

By and large, the most important point is that the couple should be utterly sincere in their intention to cooperate with and understand each other not only during times of happiness but also whenever they face difficulties.

6. SECURITY, RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sense of Insecurity

In the past, there was no such thing as a legal registration of marriages. A man and woman mutually decided to accept each other as husband and wife and thereafter they lived together. Their marriage was carried out in the presence of the community, and separation was rare. The most important thing was that they developed real love and respected their mutual responsibilities.

A legal registration of marriage is important today to ensure security and to safeguard property and children. Due to the sense of insecurity, a couple performs legal marriages to ensure that they are legally bound not to neglect their duties and not to ill-treat each other. Today, some couples even draw up a legal contract on what would happen to their property if they are divorced!

Husband and Wife

According to Buddhist teaching, in a marriage, the husband can expect the following qualities

from his wife:

- love
- attentiveness
- family obligations
- faithfulness
- child-care
- thrift
- the provision of meals
- to calm him down when he is upset
- sweetness in everything

In return, the wife's expectation from the husband is:

- tenderness
- courtesy
- sociability
- security
- fairness
- loyalty
- honesty
- good companionship
- moral support

Apart from these emotional and sensual aspects, the couple will have to take care of day-to-day living conditions, family budget and social obligations. Thus, mutual consultations between the husband and wife on all family problems would help to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding in resolving whatever issues that may arise.

The Buddha's Advice to a Couple

I The Wife

In advising women about their role in married life, the Buddha appreciated that the peace and harmony of a home rested largely on a woman. His advice was realistic and practical when he explained a good number of day-to-day characteristics which a woman should or should not cultivate. On diverse occasions, the Buddha counselled that a wife should:

a) not harbour evil thoughts against her husband;
b) not be cruel, harsh or domineering;
c) not be spendthrift but should be economical and live within her means;
d) guard and save her husband's hard-earned earnings and property;
e) always be attentive and chaste in mind and action;
f) be faithful and harbour no thought of any adulterous acts;
g) be refined in speech and polite in action;
h) be kind, industrious and hardworking;
i) be thoughtful and compassionate towards her husband and her attitude should equate that of a mother's love and concern for the protection of her only son;
j) be modest and respectful;
k) be cool, calm and understanding – serving not only as a wife but also as a friend and advisor when the need arises.

In the days of the Buddha, other religious teachers also spoke on the duties and obligations of a wife towards her husband – stressing particularly on the duty of a wife bearing an off-spring for the husband, rendering faithful service and providing conjugal happiness.

Some communities are very particular about having a son in the family. They believe that a son is necessary to perform their funeral rites so that their after-life will be a good one. The failure to get a son from the first wife, gives a man the liberty to have another wife in order to get a son. Buddhism does not support this belief.

According to what the Buddha taught about the law of Karma, one is responsible for one's own action and its consequences. Whether a son or a daughter is born is determined not by a father or mother but the karma of the child. And the well-being of a father or grandfather does not depend upon the action of the son or grandson. Each is responsible for his own actions. So, it is wrong for men to blame their wives or for a man to feel inadequate when a son is not born. Such Enlightened Teachings help to correct the views of many people and naturally reduce the anxiety of women who are unable to produce sons to perform the "rites of the ancestors".

Although the duties of a wife towards the husband were laid down in the Confucian code of discipline, it did not stress the duties and obliga-

tions of the husband towards the wife. In the **Sigalovada Sutta** however, the Buddha clearly mentioned the duties of a husband towards the wife and vice versa.

II The Husband

The Buddha, in reply to a householder as to how a husband should minister to his wife, declared that the husband should always honour and respect his wife, by being faithful to her, by giving her the requisite authority to manage domestic affairs and by giving her befitting ornaments. This advice, given over twenty five centuries ago, still stands good for today.

Knowing the psychology of the man who tends to consider himself superior, the Buddha made a remarkable change and uplifted the status of a woman by a simple suggestion that a husband should honour and respect his wife. A husband should be faithful to his wife, which means that a husband should fulfill and maintain his marital obligations to his wife thus sustaining the confidence in the marital relationship in every sense of the word. The husband, being a bread-winner, would invariably stay away from home, hence he should entrust the domestic or household duties to the wife who should be considered as the keeper and the distributor of the property and the home economic-administrator. The provision of befitting ornaments to the wife should be symbolic of the

husband's love, care and attention showered on the wife. This symbolic practice has been carried out from time immemorial in Buddhist communities. Unfortunately it is in danger of dying out because of the influence of modern civilization.

The Past

In the past, since the social structure of most communities was different from that we find today, a husband and wife were interdependent on each other. There was mutual understanding, and the relationship was stable because each knew exactly what his or her role was in the partnership. The 'love' that some husbands and wives try to show others by embracing each other in public does not necessarily indicate true love or understanding. In the past, although married couples did not express their love or inner feeling publicly, they had a deep even unspoken understanding and mutual respect for each other.

The ancient customs which people had in certain countries that the wife must sacrifice her life after her husband's death and also the custom which prevents a widow from remarrying is foreign to Buddhism. Buddhism does not regard a wife as being inferior to a husband.

Modern Society

Some women feel that for them to concen-

trate on the upbringing of the family is degrading and conservative. It is true that in the past women had been treated very badly, but this was due more to the ignorance on the part of men than the inherent weakness in the concept of depending on women to bring up children.

Women have been struggling for ages to gain equality with men in the field of education, the professions, politics and other avenues. They are now at par with men to a great extent. The male generally tends to be aggresive by nature and the female more emotional. In the domestic scene, particularly in the East, the male is more dominant as head of the family whilst the female tends to remain as passive partner. Please remember, 'passive' here does not mean 'weak'. Rather it is a positive quality of 'softness' and 'gentleness'. If man and woman maintain their masculine and feminine qualities inherited from nature and recognise their respective strengths, then, that attitude can contribute towards a congenial mutual understanding between the sexes.

Gandhi's remarks:

'I believe in the proper education of woman. But I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with man. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man'.

Parental Responsibilities

The basis of all human society is the intricate relationship between parent and child. A mother's duty is to love, care and protect the child, even at extreme cost. This is the self-sacrificing love that the Buddha taught. It is practical, caring and generous and it is selfless. Buddhists are taught that parents should care for the child as the earth cares for all the plants and creatures.

Parents are responsible for the well-being and up-bringing of their children. If the child grows up to be a strong, healthy and useful citizen, it is the result of parents' efforts. If the child grows up to be a delinquent, parents must bear the responsibility. One must not blame others or society if children go astray. It is the duty of parents to guide children on the proper path.

A child, at its most impressionable age, needs the tender love, care and attention of parents. Without parental love and guidance, a child will be handicapped and will find the world a bewildering place to live in. However, showering parental love, care and attention does not mean pandering to all the demands of the child, reasonable or otherwise. Too much pampering would spoil the child. The mother in bestowing her love and care, should also be strict and firm in handling the tantrums of a child. Being strict and firm does not mean being

harsh to the child. Show your love, but temper it with a disciplined hand – the child will understand.

Unfortunately, amongst present-day parents, parental love is sadly lacking. The mad rush for material advancement, the liberation movements and the aspiration for equality, have resulted in many mothers joining their husbands, spending their working hours in offices and shops, rather than remaining at home tending to their off-spring. The children, left to the care of relations or paid servants, are bewildered on being denied tender motherly love and care. The mother, feeling guilty about her lack of attention, tries to placate the child by giving in to all sorts of demands from the child. Such an action spoils the child. Providing the child with all sorts of modern toys such as tanks, machine guns, pistols, swords and such like equipment as an appeasement is not psychologically good.

Loading a child with such toys is no substitute for a mother's tender love and affections. Devoid of parental affection and guidance, it will not be surprising if the child subsequently grows up to be a delinquent. Then, who is to be blamed for bringing up a wayward child? The parents of course! The working mother, especially after a hard day's work in an office to be followed by household chores, can hardly find time for the child that is yearning for her care and attention. Parents who have no time for their children should not complain when these same children have no

time for them when they are old. Parents who claim that they spend a lot of money on their children but are too busy should not complain when their "busy" children in turn leave them in expensive Homes for the Aged!

Most women work today so that the family can enjoy more material benefits. They should seriously consider Gandhi's advice for men to seek freedom from greed rather than freedom from need. Of course, given today's economic set-up we cannot deny that some mothers are forced to work. In such a case, the father and mother must make extra sacrifices of their time to compensate for what their children miss when they are away. If both parents spend their non-working hours at home with their children, there will be greater understanding between parents and children.

In his discourses, the Buddha has listed certain primary duties and functions as essential guide-lines for parents to observe. One of the primary guide-lines is, by precept, practice and action, to lead the children away from things that are evil and through gentle persuasion, to guide them to do all that is good for the family, for society and for the country. In this connection, parents would have to exercise great care in dealing with their children. It is not what the parents profess but what they really are and do, that the child absorbs unconsciously and lovingly. The child's entry to the world is moulded by emulating parental behaviour. It follows that good begets

good and evil begets evil. Parents who spend much time with their children will subtly transmit their characteristics to their offspring.

Duties of Parents

It is the duty of parents to see to the welfare of their children. In fact the dutiful and loving parents shoulder the responsibilities with pleasure. To lead children on the right path, parents should first set the example and lead ideal lives. It is almost impossible to expect worthy children from unworthy parents. Apart from the Karmic tendencies children inherit from previous births, they invariably inherit the defects and virtues of parents too. Responsible parents should take every precaution not to transmit undesirable, tendencies to their progeny.

According to the **Sigalovada Sutta,** there are five duties that should be performed by parents:–

The first duty is to dissuade children from evil.

Home is the first school, and parents are the first teachers. Children usually take elementary lessons in good and evil from their parents. Careless parents directly or indirectly impart an elementary knowledge of lying, cheating, dishonesty, slandering, revenge, shamelessness and fearlessness for evil and immoral activities to their children during childhood days.

Parents should show exemplary conduct and should not transmit such vices into their children's impressionable minds.

The second duty is to persuade them to do good.

Parents are the teachers at home; teachers are the parents in school. Both parents and teachers are responsible for the future well-being of the children, who become what they are made into. They are, and they will be, what the adults are. They sit at the feet of the adults during their impressionable age. They imbibe what they impart. They follow in their footsteps. They are influenced by their thoughts, words and deeds. As such it is the duty of the parents to create the most congenial atmosphere both at home and in the school.

Simplicity, obedience, co-operation, unity, courage, self-sacrifice, honesty, straightforwardness, service, self-reliance, kindness, thrift, contentment, good manners, religious zeal and other kindred virtues should be inculcated in their juvenile minds by degrees. Seeds so planted will eventually grow into fruit-laden trees.

The third duty is to give the children a good education.

A decent education is the best legacy that parents can bequeath to their children. A more valuable treasure there is not. It is the best blessing that parents could confer on their children.

Education should be imparted to them, preferably from youth, in a religious atmosphere. This has far-reaching effects on their lives.

The fourth duty is to see that they are married to suitable individuals.

Marriage is a solemn act that pertains to the whole lifetime; this union should be one that cannot be dissolved easily. Hence, marriage has to be viewed from every angle and in all its aspects to the satisfaction of all parties before the wedding.

According to Buddhist culture, duty supercedes rights. Let both parties be not adamant, but use their wise discretion and come to an amicable settlement. Otherwise, there will be mutual cursing and other repercussions. More often than not the infection is transmitted to progeny as well.

The last duty is to hand over to them, at the proper time, their inheritance.

Parents not only love and tend their children as long as they are still in their custody, but also make preparations for their future comfort and happiness. They hoard up treasures at personal discomfort and ungrudgingly give them as a legacy to their children.

The Religion of Compassion

Buddhism is the religion of compassion, and the parents should never forget to present it to the

children as such. The Buddha taught the Dhamma out of compassion for the world. Parents should practise the "Four Sublime States of Mind" taught by the Buddha in raising their children. They are:

Metta	–	lovingkindness or goodwill
Karuna	–	compassion
Mudita	–	sympathetic joy
Upekkha	–	equanimity or "even-mindedness"

These four states, well practised will help parents remain calm throughout the difficult period of child-rearing.

This is the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings. These four attitudes of mind provide the framework for all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peacemakers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle for existence; levellers of social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakeners of slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revivers of joy and hope long abandoned, promoters of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that a married couple has to face is the proper upbringing of a chiid. This is another aspect which distinguishes us from animals. While an animal does care for its offspring with great devotion, a human parent has a greater responsibility, which is the nurturing of the mind. The Buddha has said that the greatest

challenge a man faces is to tame the mind. Ever since a child is born, from infancy through adolescence to maturity, a parent is primarily responsible for the development of a child's mind. Whether a person becomes a useful citizen or not depends mainly on the extent to which its mind has been developed. In Buddhism, a good parent can practise four great virtues to sustain him or her and to overcome the great frustrations which are so closely related with parenthood.

When a child is yet a toddler, unable to express its needs, it is quite prone to indulge in tantrums and crying. A parent who practises the first virtue of loving kindness can maintain peace within herself or himself to continue to love the child while it is being so difficult. A child who enjoys the effects of this loving kindness will himself learn to radiate it spontaneously.

As the child becomes more mature as an adolescent, parents should practise *Karuna* or Compassion towards him. Adolescence is a very difficult time for children. They are coming to terms with adulthood and therefore are rebellious, with a great deal of their anger and frustrations directed at their parents. With the practise of Compassion, parents will understand that this rebelliousness is a natural part of growing up and that children do not mean to hurt their parents wilfully. A child who has enjoyed loving kindness and compassion will himself become a better person. Having not had hate directed at him, he

will only radiate love and compassion towards others.

Just before he becomes an adult, a child will probably meet with some success in examinations and other activities outside the home. This is the time for parents to practise sympathetic joy. Too many parents in modern society use their children to compete with their associates. They want their children to do well for selfish reasons; it is all because they want others to think well of them. By practising sympathetic joy, a parent will rejoice in the success and happiness of his or her child with no ulterior motive. He is happy simply because his child is happy! A child who has been exposed to the effects of sympathetic joy will himself become a person who does not envy others and who is not overly competitive. Such a person will have no room in his heart for selfishness, greed or hatred.

When a child has reached adulthood and has a career and family of his own, his parents should practise the last great virtue of equanimity *(Upekkha)*. This is one of the most difficult things for Asian parents to practise. It is hard for them to allow their children to become independent in their own right. When parents practise equanimity, they will not interfere with the affairs of their children and not be selfish in demanding more time and attention than the children can give. Young adults in the modern society have many problems. An understanding parent of a young couple should

not impose extra burdens by making unnecessary demands on them. Most importantly, elderly parents should try not to make their married children feel guilty by making them feel that they have neglected their filial obligations. If parents practise equanimity they will remain serene in their old age and thereby earn the respect of the younger generation.

When parents practise these four virtues towards their children, the children will respond favourably and a pleasant atmosphere will prevail at home. A home where there is loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity will be a happy home. Children who grow up under such an environment will grow up to be understanding, compassionate, willing workers and considerate employers. This is the greatest legacy any parent can give to his child.

Parents in Modern Society

One of the saddest things about modern society is the lack of parental love which children in highly industrialized countries suffer from. When a couple gets married, they usually plan to have a number of children. And once the child is born, parents are morally obliged to care for him to the best of their ability. Parents are responsible to see that a child is not only satisfied materially; the spiritual and psychological aspects are very important too.

The provision of material comfort is of secondary importance when compared to the provision of parental love and attention. We know of many parents from the not-so-well-to-do families who have brought up their children well and with plenty of love. On the other hand, many rich families have provided every material comfort for their children but have deprived them of parental love. Such children will just grow up devoid of any psychological and moral development.

A mother should consider carefully whether she should continue to be a working mother or a housewife giving all the affection and care for the well-being of her growing child. (Strangely, some modern mothers are also being trained to handle guns and other deadly equipments when they should be cuddling their children and training them to be good and law-abiding citizens.)

The modern trend and attitude of working mothers towards their children also tends to erode the time-honoured filial piety which children are expected to shower on their parents. The replacement of breast-feeding by bottle feeding could also be another factor which has contributed to the erosion of the affection between mother and child. When mothers breast-feed and cuddle babies in their arms, the tender affection between mother and child is much greater and the influence the mother had on the child for its well-being, is much more pronounced. Under such circumstances, filial

piety, family cohesion and obedience are invariably present. These traditional traits are for the good and well-being of the child. It is up to the parents, especially the mother, to provide them. The mother is responsible for the child's being good or wayward. Mothers can reduce delinquency!

Parental Control

Many parents try to keep their married children under their control. They do not give due freedom to them and tend to interfere with a young married couple's life. When parents try to control their married son or married daughter and want them to follow their way of life strictly, this will create a lot of misunderstanding between the two generations as well as unhappiness between the couple. Parents may be doing it in good faith due to love and attachment towards the children, but in so doing, they are inviting more problems to themselves and to the children.

Parents must allow their children to shoulder the responsibilities of their own lives and families. For example: if some seeds are dropped under a tree, plants might grow after sometime. But if you want those plants to grow healthy and independent you must transplant them to open ground somewhere else to grow separately, so that they are not hampered by the shade of the parent tree.

Parents should not neglect the ancient

wisdom based on advice given by religious teachers, wise people and elders who have developed a knowledge of the world through their own trial and errors.

Divorce

Divorce is a controversial issue among the followers of different religions. Some people believe that marriage is already recorded in heaven, thus it is not right to grant a divorce. But, if a husband and wife really cannot live together, instead of leading a miserable life and harbouring more jealousy, anger and hatred, they should have the liberty to separate and live peacefully.

Responsibility Towards The Children

However, the separation of the couple must be done in an atmosphere of understanding by adopting reasonable solutions and not by creating more hatred. If a couple has children, they should try to make the divorce less traumatic for the children and help them to adjust to the new situation. And it is most important to ensure that their future and welfare will be taken care of. It is an inhuman attitude if the couple desert their children and allow them to lead a miserable life.

The Buddhist View

In Buddhism, there is no law stating that a husband and wife should not be separated if they

cannot live together harmoniously. But, if people follow the advice given by the Buddha to fulfil their duties towards each other, then, such unfortunate occurrences like divorce or separation will never happen in the first place.

In the past, where religious values were highly respected, there were greater efforts on the part of married couples – in the east as well as in west – to reach an amicable understanding to develop happy relationships based on respect, love, and regard for one another. Couples developed and made their marriages an important feature which they cherished in their hearts. Divorce cases were very rare, and were considered a disgrace because they indicated the selfishness of one party or the other.

It is a fact that until recently divorce cases were still rather rare in Buddhist countries. This is mainly because couples considered their duties and obligations towards each other, and also basically divorce is not approved by the community as a whole. In many cases, when married couples were in trouble, the community elders usually rallied round and played an important role to improve the situation.

Unfortunately, in the modern society of today, divorce has become such a common practice. In certain countries it has even become fashionable. Instead of regarding divorce as shameful or a failure to order their lives, some young

couples seem to be proud of it. The main cause of the failure in marriage in modern society is the abuse of freedom and too much independence and individualism on the part of the partners. There must be a limit to their independent lives, or else both husband and wife will go astray very easily.

7. POLYGAMY OR MONOGAMY

To the question of whether Buddhists can keep more than one wife, the direct answer is not available in the Buddha's teaching, because as mentioned earlier, the Buddha did not lay down any religious laws with regard to married life although he has given valuable advice on how to lead a respectable married life.

Tradition, culture and the way of life as recognised by the majority of a particular country must also be considered when we practise certain things pertaining to our lives. Some religions say that a man can have only one wife whilst others say a man can have more than one wife.

Although the Buddha did not mention anything regarding the number of wives a man could have, he explicitly mentioned in His discourses that should a married man go to another woman out of wedlock, that could become the cause of his own downfall and he would have to face numerous other problems and disturbances.

The Buddha's way of teaching is just to explain the situation and the consequences. People can think for themselves as to why certain things are good and certain things are bad. The Buddha did not lay down rules about how many wives a

man should or should not have which people are forced to follow. However, if the laws of a country stipulate that marriages must be monogamous, then such laws must be complied with, because the Buddha was explicit about His followers respecting the laws of a country, if those laws were beneficial to all.

8. NEW TECHNOLOGY

Family Planning

Some religions are not in favour of family planning. They say it is against the will of God. Buddhism does not interfere in this personal choice. Man is at liberty to follow any method in order to prevent conception. According to Buddhism, certain physical and mental conditions must be present for conception to take place. When any one of these conditions is absent (like when family planning is being practised), no conception takes place, therefore a life does not come into being. But after conception, abortion is **NOT** acceptable in Buddhism because it means taking away a life that is already present in the form of foetus.

Test-tube Babies

Some people are interested in the moral implication or religious attitude with regard to test-tube babies. If a woman is unable to conceive a baby in the normal way, and if she is anxious to have a baby by adopting modern medical methods, there is no ground in Buddhism to say that it is either immoral or irreligious. Religions must give due credit to man's intelligence and to accommodate new medical discoveries if they are harmless and

beneficial to mankind. As was mentioned earlier, so long as the conditions are right, conception can be allowed to take place, naturally or artificially.

MORALITY

Premarital Sex

Premarital sex is a problem which is much discussed in modern society. Many young people would like to know the opinion regarding this sensitive issue. Some religionists say it can be considered as committing adultery, while others say it is immoral and unjustifiable.

In the past, young boys and girls were not allowed by their parents to move around freely until they were married. Their marriages were also arranged and organised by the parents. Of course, this did cause unhappiness in some cases when parents chose partners on the basis of money, social status, family obligations and related issues. But generally, the majority of parents did try very hard to choose partners who would be acceptable to their children.

Today, young people are at the liberty to go out and find their own partners. They have a lot of freedom and independence in their lives. This is not a bad thing in itself, but some of these people are just too young and too immature to see the difference between sexual attraction and true compatibility. That is why the problem of pre-marital sex arises.

Too much laxity in matters concerning sex has also given rise to social problems in modern society. The sad part is that some societies do not express liberal attitudes towards unmarried mothers, illegitimate children and the divorcees while they are quite liberal about free sex. As a result, young people are being punished by the same society which encourages free mixing of the sexes. They become social outcasts and suffer much shame and humiliation. Many young girls have become victims of their own freedom and have ruined their future by violating age-old traditions which were valued in the east as well as in the west.

Pre-marital sex is a modern development which has come about as a result of excessive social freedom prevalent amongst present day young people. Whilst Buddhism holds no strong views either for or against such action, it is thought that all Buddhists, particularly people of both sexes in love and contemplating marriage, should adhere to the age-old traditional concept that they maintain chastity until the nuptial date. The human mind is unstable and forever changing with the result that any illicit action or indiscretion may cause undue harm to either party if the legal marriage does not take place as expected. It must be remembered that any form of sexual indulgence before a proper marriage is solemnised will be looked down upon by the elders who are the guardians of the young people.

Sexual Misconduct

Laymen are advised in the Buddha's Teaching

to avoid sexual misconduct. That means, if one wants to experience sex, he must do so without creating any violence or by using any kind of force, threat or causing fear. A decent sex life which respects the other partner is not against this religion; it accepts the fact that it is a necessity for those who are not yet ready to renounce the worldly life.

According to Buddhism, those who are involved in extra-marital sex with someone who is already married, who has been betrothed to someone else, and also with those who are under the protection of their parents or guardians are said to be guilty of **sexual misconduct**, because there is a rupture of social norms, where a third party is being made to suffer as a result of the selfishness of one or the other partner.

Irresponsible Sexual Behaviour

The Buddha also mentioned the consequences that an elderly man would have to face if he married without considering the compatibility of age of the other party. According to the Buddha, irresponsible sexual behaviour can become the cause of one's downfall in many aspects of life.

All the nations of the world have clearly defined laws concerning the abuse of sex. Here again, Buddhism advocates that a person must respect and obey the law of the country if the laws are made for the common good.

10. THE EAST AND THE WEST

The following are extracts from a book by the celebrated Japanese author – Dr. Nikkyo Niwano. In his book **"The Richer Life"**, Dr. Niwano deals with matters relating to love and marriage, both from the Eastern and Western points of view.

"In the West, marriage on the basis of romantic love has often been considered natural and sometimes ideal. In Asia, in recent years, the number of young people who abandon the traditional arranged marriage and select partners out of romantic consideration has been growing. But in some cases, romantic marriages lead to separation and unhappiness within a short time, whereas the arranged marriage often produces a couple who live and work together in contentment and happiness.

In spite of its emotional appeal, all romantic marriages cannot be called unqualified successes. Romantic love is like the bright flame of a woodfire that leaps up and burns clear, but lasts only a short time. Love between man and wife burns quietly and slowly like the warming fire of burning coal. Of course, bright flaming love can – and ideally ought to – eventually become the calm, enduring fire of mature affection. But too often the flame of romantic love is quickly extinguished, leaving nothing but ashes, which are a poor foundation for a successful married life!

"Young people in love think of nothing but

their emotions. They see themselves only in the light of the feeling of the moment. Everything they think and do is romantic and has little bearing on the practical affairs of the life they must lead after marriage. If the lovers are fortunate enough to have compatible personalities, to have sound and similar ideas about life, to share interests, to enjoy harmonious family relations on both sides and to be financially secure even after the first passion has calmed down, they will still have a basis for a good life together. If they are not so blessed, they may face marital failure".

"When the time of dates, emotional pictures, dances, and parties has passed, the young married couples will have to live together, share meals, and reveal to each other their defects as well as their merits. They will have to spend more than half of their life each day together; this kind of living makes demands that are different from the less exacting needs of dating and first love."

"Family relations become very important in married life. It is necessary to think about the personalities of the mother and father of the prospective marriage partner. Young people sometimes think that the strength of their love will enable them to get along well with the most quarrelsome, difficult in-laws; but this is not always true. In short, romance is a matter of a limited time and does not become rooted in actualities and must be regulated to conform to the needs of work and environment in order to

bind the couple together in lasting devotion. The two kinds of love are different. To mistake one for the other invites grave trouble."

"Giving serious, dispassionate thought to the nature of the person one contemplates marrying, lessens the likelihood of failure. To prevent romance from vanishing after marriage, mutual understanding between the couple is indispensable. But the percentage of successful marriages is higher among young people whose choice of a partner agrees with the opinions of their parents. To live peacefully, it is necessary to realize the difference between romance and married love."

11. CELIBACY

What is Celibacy?

Celibacy is refraining from the pleasure of sexual activity. Some critics of Buddhism say that The Teaching goes against Nature and they claim that sex life is natural and therefore necessary.

Buddhism is not against sex, it is a natural sensual pleasure and very much a part of the worldly life. One may ask, why then did the Buddha advocate celibacy as a precept? Is it not unfair and against Nature? Well, the observance of celibacy for spiritual development was not a new religious precept at the time of the Buddha. All the other existing religions in India at that time also had introduced this practice. Even today, some other religionists, like the Hindus and Catholics do observe this as a vow.

Buddhists who have renounced the worldly life voluntarily observe this precept because they are fully aware of the commitments and disturbances which come along if one commits oneself to the life of a family person. The married life can affect or curtail spiritual development when craving for sex and attachment occupies the mind and temptation eclipses the peace and purity of the mind.

Significance of Celibacy

People tend to ask, "If the Buddha did not preach against married life, why then did He advocate celibacy as one of the important precepts to be observed and why did He advise people to avoid sex and renounce the worldly life?"

One must remember that renunciation is not compulsory in Buddhism. It is not obligatory to renounce the worldly life totally in order to practise Buddhism. You can adjust your way of life according to your understanding by practising certain religious principles and qualities. You can develop your religious principles according to the needs of a lay life. However, when you have progressed and attained greater wisdom and realise that the layman's way of life is not conducive for the ultimate development of *SPIRITUAL VIRTUES* and *PURIFICATION* of the *MIND*, you may choose to renounce the worldly life and concentrate more on spiritual development.

The Buddha recommended celibacy because sex and marriage are not conducive to ultimate peace and purity of the mind, and renunciation is necessary if one wishes to gain spiritual development and perfection at the highest level. But this renunciation should come naturally, and must never be *FORCED*. Renunciation should come through a complete understanding of the illusory nature of the self, of the unsatisfactory nature of all sense pleasures.

Celibacy versus Responsibility – The Buddha's Experience

The Buddha experienced his worldly life as a prince, husband and a father before his Renunciation and he knew what married life entailed. People may question the Buddha's renunciation by saying that he was selfish and cruel and that it was not fair for him to desert his wife and child. In actual fact, the Buddha did not desert his family without a sense of responsibility.

He never had any misunderstanding with his wife. He too had the same love and attachment towards his wife and child as any normal man would have, perhaps even greater. The difference was that his love was not mere physical and selfish love, he had the courage and understanding to detach that emotional and selfish love for a good cause. His sacrifice is considered all the more noble because he set aside his personal needs and desires in order to *SERVE ALL OF MANKIND FOR ALL TIME.*

The main aim of his renunciation was not only for his own happiness, peace or salvation but for the sake of *MANKIND.* Had he remained in the royal palace, his service would have been confined to only his own family or his kingdom. That was why he decided to renounce everything in order to maintain peace and purity to gain Enlightenment and then to enlighten others who were suffering in ignorance.

One of the Buddha's earliest tasks after gaining his Enlightenment was to return to his palace to enlighten the members of his family. In fact, when his young son, Rahula asked the Buddha for his inheritance, the Buddha said that Rahula was heir to the richest wealth, the treasure of the Dhamma. In this way, the Buddha served his family, and he paved the way for their salvation, peace and happiness. Therefore, no one can say that the Buddha was a cruel or selfish father. He was in fact more compassionate and self-sacrificing than anybody else. With his high degree of spiritual development, the Buddha knew that marriage was a temporary phase while Enlightenment was eternal and for the good of *ALL MANKIND.*

Another important fact was that the Buddha knew that his wife and son would not starve in his absence. During the time of the Buddha it was considered quite normal and honourable for a young man to retire from the life of a householder. Other members of the family would willingly look after his dependents. When he gained his enlightenment, he was able to give them something no other father could give – the freedom from slavery to attachment.

12. SUMMARY

Marriage is a partnership of two individuals and this partnership is enriched and enhanced when it allows the personalities involved to grow. Many marriages fail because one partner tries to "swallow" another or when one demands total freedom. According to Buddhism, marriage means understanding and respecting each other's belief and privacy. A successful marriage is always a two-way path: "humpy, bumpy", it is difficult but it is always a mutual path.

Young people in this country and elsewhere sometimes think that "old fashioned ideas" are not relevant to modern society. They should be reminded that there are some eternal truths which can never become out-of-date. What was true during the time of Buddha still remains true today.

The so-called modern ideas we receive through the highly glamourous television programmes do not represent the way most decent people in the west think or behave. There is a vast "silent majority" of decent couples who are as deeply religious and "conservative" about marriage as any Eastern couple. They do not behave in the manner that the mass media has portrayed them. Not all the people in the west run off to get a divorce or abortion after their first quarrel or dispute.

Decent people all over the world are the same; they are unselfish and care deeply about those whom they love. They make enormous sacrifices and develop love and understanding to ensure happy and stable marriages. So, if you want to ape the west ape the "silent majority": they are no different from your decent neighbour who lives next door to you.

Young people must also listen to their elders because their own understanding about married life is not mature. They should not make hasty conclusions regarding marriages and divorces. They must have a lot of patience, tolerance and mutual understanding. Otherwise, their life can become very miserable and problematic. *PATIENCE, TOLERANCE AND UNDER–*STANDING are important disciplines to be observed and practised by all people in marriage.

A feeling of security and contentment comes from mutual understanding which is the *SECRET* of a *HAPPY MARRIED LIFE.*

APPENDIX

Appendix I

THE AFFECTIONATE MOTHER

In the Buddhist Jataka story – Sonadanda, the Bodhisatta sings the virtues of a mother in the following strain:

'Kind, Pitiful, our refuge she that fed us at her breast. A mother is the way to heaven, and thee she loveth best.

She nursed and fostered us with care; graced with good gifts is she,

A mother is the way to heaven, and best she loveth thee.

Craving a child in prayer she kneels each holy shrine before.

The changing season closely scans and studies astral lore.

Pregnant in course of time she feels her tender longings grow,

And soon the unconscious babe begins a loving friend to know.

Her treasure for a year or less she guards with utmost care,

Then brings it forth and from that day a mother's name will bear.

With milky breast and lullaby she soothes the fretting child,

Wrapped in his comforter's warm arms his woes are soon beguiled.

Watching o'er him, poor innocent, lest wind or hear annoy,

His fostering nurse she may be called, to cherish thus her boy.

What gear his sire and mother have she hoards for him 'May be',

She thinks, 'Some day, my dearest child, it all may come to thee'.

'Do this or that, my darling boy', the worried mother cries,

And when he is grown to man's estate, she still laments and sighs,

He goes in reckless mood to see a neighbour's wife at night,

She fumes and frets, 'Why will he not return while it is light?'

If one thus reared with anxious pains his mother should neglect,

Playing her false, what doom, I pray, but hell can be expect?

Those that love wealth o'er much, 'tis said, their wealth will soon be lost

One that neglects a mother soon will rue it to his cost.

Those that love wealth o'er much, 'tis said, their wealth will soon be lost.

One that neglects a father soon will rue it to his cost.

Gifts, loving speech, kind offices together with the grace

Of calm indifference of mind shown in due time and place –

These virtues to the world are as lynchpin to chariot wheel.

These lacking, still a mother's name to children would appeal'.

A mother like the sire should with reverent honour be crowned,

Sages approve the man in whom those virtues may be found.

Thus parents worthy of all praise, a high-position own,

By ancient sages Brahma called. So great was their renown.

Kind parents from their children should receive all reverence due,

He that is wise will honour them with service good and true.

He should provide them food and drink, bedding and raiment meet,

Should bathe them and anoint with oil and duly wash their feet.

So filial services like these sages his praises sound

Here in this world, and after death in heaven his joys bound'.

(Jataka Translation Vol.V.pp. 173, 174)

Appendix II

MORAL CODE

1 Social and Moral Code

The most important element of the Buddhist reform has always been its social and moral code. That moral code taken by itself is one of the most perfect which the world has ever known. On this point all testimonials from hostile and friendly quarters agree; philosophers there may have been, religious preachers, subtle metaphysicists, disputants there may have been, but where shall we find such an incarnation of love, love that knows no distinction of caste and creed or colour, a love that overflowed even the bounds of humanity, that embraced the whole of sentient beings in its sweep, a love that embodied as the gospel of universal *'Maitri'* and *'Ahimsa'*.

(Prof. Max Muller, A German Buddhist Scholar)

2 Morality is based on freedom

Buddhist morality is based on freedom, i.e. on individual development. It is therefore relative. In fact there cannot be any ethical principle if

there is compulsion or determination from an agent outside ourselves.

(Anagarika B. Govinda, A German Buddhist Scholar)

3 Knowledge and Morality

In Buddhism there can be no real morality without knowledge, no real knowledge without morality; both are bound up together like heat and light in a flame. What constitutes *'Bodhi'* is not mere intellectual, enlightenment, but humanity. The consciousness of moral excellence is of the very essence of *'Bodhi'*.

(Bhikkhu Dhammapla, A Netherland Buddhist Scholar)

PLEASE WRITE TO:-

VEN. G. Gnanissara
GANGARAMAYA BUDDHIST TEMPLE
61, Sri Jinaratana Road, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka
Tel: 27084, 435169, 23038

OR

VEN. SARADA
THE SINGAPORE BUDDHIST MEDITATION CENTRE
No. 11, Neo Pee Teck Lane, Singapore 0511.
Tel: 7783330

SPONSORS TO DEFRAY THE PRINTING COST ARE WELCOME.

NAME AND AUTHOR	**DONATED BY**
THE GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY by. W. V. Zinn	Mr. W. V. Zinn
BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS compiled by Ven. Sarada Thero	Mr Lee Beng Huat & Mr Miss Chan Gim Ai
PHENOMENA AND NOUMENA by W. V. Zinn	Mr Tay Boon Soo & Mr Tay Yong Hong
REFLECTION ON DEATH compiled by Ven. Sarada Thero	Mr Robert Ang Chee Soong
BUDDHISM EXPLAINED by Bikkhu Kantipala	Mrs Piyasena
THE BUDDHIST WAY OF MEDITATION compiled by Ven. Sarada Thero	Datin Lau Khoo Gueh Noi

AN INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA GOTAMA (A BUDDHIST CATECHISM) by Subhadra Bhikshu	In memory of the late G.A. Podisingho by his children
WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT (CHINESE) by Walpola Rahula	Capt. Swee Lim Guan & Mdm. Chan Fong Lim
MEDITATION ON LOVING-KINDNESS (KARANIYA METTA SUTTA) by Ven. Sarada Thero	Mr D. Alahendra
A YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIFE OF THE BUDDHA by Bhikkhu Silacara	Mrs Niciju Okada
WHY WORRY by Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda	Mr & Mrs A.P. Palliyaguru
THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING ITS ESSENTIAL MEANING by R.G. de S Wettimuny	Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre
THE WAY OF MINDFULNESS THE SATIPATTHANA SUTTA & COMMENTARY by Soma Thera	Mr Kua Chong Siang of Brunei
THE THIRTY-ONE STATES OF BEING & BECOMING by Egerton C. Baptist	Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre

THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING & THE AMBIGUITY OF EXISTENCE by S. Wettimuny	Mdm Wee Teck Kim & family Singapore
HALO'D TRIUMPHS JAYA MANGALA GATHA by Acharya Buddharakkhita	Mr Chan Chee Seng
THE LIFE OF BUDDHA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE by Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Maha Nayaka Thera	Mrs Takiko Yoshida in memory of her late husband Mr Kishi Yoshida
LIFE OF THE BUDDHA IN PICTURE by Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Maha Nayaka Thera	Miss Adeline Ang Miss Indra Ang Miss Eileen Ang
THE WAY TO PEACE & HAPPINESS compiled by Yogavacara Rahula	Mr Than Myint & Mdm Daw Than Yi in Memory of the late Mr Sein Yin & Mdm Daw Lai Shwe
THE BUDDHA WORD by Weragoda Sarada Kondanna Edwin Ariyadasa	Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre
MEDITATION IN THERAVADA & ZEN by Bhikkhu Ananda	Mr Peter Lai
THE KALAMA SUTTA	Mr Kio Guan Heng & Family
BUDDHIST RULES FOR THE LAITY by D.J. Subasingha	Mdm Ho Yuk Ying

THE FIVE PRECEPTS by Dr. Paul Dahlke	Mr Freddie Leong
THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY by Egerton C. Baptist	Miss Chew Beng Suan
THE SEVEN STAGES OF PURIFICATION & THE INSIGHT KNOWLEDGE by Ven. Matara Sri Nanarama Mahathera	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children Miss Goh Hwee Kiat Miss Rhoda Ow Yeong
THE MIRROR OF THE DHAMMA by Venerables Narada Maha Thera and Kassapa Thera	In memory of the late Mrs Margaret Ranaweere by her daughters Rose & Lily & their children
A MANUAL OF BUDDHISM by Narada Thera	Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
BUDDHISM FOR BEGINNERS by Ven. Narada	Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
WHY WORRY (REPRINT) by Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda	Mdm Lim Guat Eng Miss Khoo Hui Joo Miss L. Khoo
VANDANA BUDDHIST DEVOTIONS compiled by Ven. Ratana Siri	Ven. K. Wimalajothi in memory of the late Mr Loke Wan Yat
MEDITATION ON BREATHING by Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Maha Nayaka Thera	In memory of the late Mdm Koh Saw Tin & Mdm Yeoh Siew Eng
THE SUPREME SCIENCE OF THE BUDDHA by Egerton C. Baptist	Mr. Wee Chong Moi (Bernard)

DO YOU BELIEVE IN REBIRTH? by Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda	Mdm Pek Boh Lan
SUPREME SCIENCE OF THE BUDDHA by Egerton C. Baptist	In memory of the late Mdm Lim Ah Sah & Mr Koh Keng Chia by their children & grandchildren
BUDDHISM FOR EVERY MAN by W.G. Weeraratne	Mr. & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
THE WORD OF THE BUDDHA by Ven Nyanatiloka	Mr & Mrs Seng Joo How
SIGALOVADA SUTTA by Pandit. P. Pemaratana Nayaka Thero	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
THE BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHING by Ven. Narada Maha Thera	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
A MANUAL OF ABHIDHAMMA by Ven. Narada Maha Thera	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children
WHY WORRY (REPRINT) by Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda	Mdm Wong Seng Yee
THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FULL MOONS by Alec Robertson	Mr & Mrs Lim Ah Swan & children

ANAPANA SATHI BHAVANA by Ven. Nauyane Ariyadhamma	Mrs K.R. William & children
MEDITATION ON LOVING KINDNESS by Ven. W. Sarada	In memory of the Late Mdm Ng Tah Ing by her beloved children
PORTRAIT OF THE BUDDHA by Jayasena Jayakody	Mr Vincent Warnakulasuriya and Mrs P.L.P. Warnakulasuriya
WHY WORRY (REPRINT) by K. Sri Dhammananda	Mdm. Lim Guat Eng
MANUAL OF BUDDHISM (REPRINT) by Narada Thera	In memory of the Late Mr. Chua Sze Ann by Miss. Chua Sway Lui Mr Lim Hock Seng
DHAMMAPADA (Syllabus Y.M.B.A. Colombo) by Narada	Mangala Vihara
LIFESTORY OF THE BUDDHA IN MURALS SEEN AT MANGALA VIHARA SINGAPORE (WITH 132 COLOUR PICTURES) compiled by Miss Padma Kong	Sponsored by Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple Singapore
A HAPPY MARRIED LIFE by Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda	In Loving Memory of Mdm Foo Kim Swee & Mr Ee Tham Poh Sponsored by Mr. Ee Fook Choy & Family
ABHIDHAMMA FOR BEGINNER by Egerton C. Baptist	Miss Ang Poh Tin

REPRINTING OF BUDDHIST LITERATURE FOR

"The gift of truth excels all other gifts."
— Buddha

A Happy Married Life

This gift of Dhamma has been made available to you through the generosity of the donors. As this publication is distributed, funds towards its re-printing is our major setback. So your contribution to this good cause will be a great help. No sum is too small, for in the act of giving, it is the heart of wanting to share that counts.

"May you be well and happy."

For reprinting please write to or call :-

Ven'ble W. Sarada Thero
Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre
No. 11, Neo Pee Teck Lane
Singapore 0511.
Tel: 7783330 Fax: 7730150